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ABSTRACT

Canadians aged 55 or older are a growing proportion of the population. Involuntary unemployment among older workers is gaining attention as an urgent social problem. The special training needs of older workers and retired individuals have received increasing recognition in Canada. However, concern expressed in the media and in government discussion papers has been slow to translate into policies and programs, particularly programs for those who require training in job skills. Conflicting claims about the willingness of older workers to undertake training may be explained by insufficient encouragement to participate in training programs or an unresolved policy debate at the federal level concerning whether these workers should be encouraged to retrain at all. Although there is yet little public policy on training or retraining older workers, some interesting pilot projects are being conducted in the field. Manitoba's Job Training Program for Tomorrow offers wage assistance to encourage creation of positions with on-the-job training. Transitions, an Ontario program, offers a training credit to cover a specified amount of training expenses. Federal programs include the Canadian Jobs Strategy, an umbrella program, and the National Labour Market Innovations Program. Training for older workers aimed at enhancing retirement seems less problematic. University courses and programs are not generally liked by older workers who feel unwelcome. (78 references) (YLB)

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Discussion Paper No. 22

TRAINING OF OLDER WORKERS IN CANADA

by Mary Trueman

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PREFACE

This report on the training situation of older people in Canada has been produced in the framework of the ILO research dealing with training and retraining needs of older workers in industrialised countries.

The author of the present paper who finished writing in June 1988 was asked to work along the following guide-lines:

- *What is the demographic and employment situation of older people in Canada?*
- *What impact have current pension schemes on the older workers?*
- *Do the government, the employers, and the union have any training policies for older workers?*
- *Are there acts, laws, rules or regulations concerning training of older workers?*
- *Are there regular training procedures, pilot projects or experiments targeted at older people?*
- *Is any impact from the initial training to be seen?*
- *Is there any incorporation of the results obtained into the training and education policies?*
- *Which are the main institutions and organisations and who are the well-known individuals active in this field?*

The findings are based on published papers and information supplied upon request by institutions and organisations that deal with older workers.

The report refers in its first section to the demographic and employment situation of older workers. The second section deals with training policies for older worker and their degree of implementation. Section 3 refers to acts, regular training programmes and pilot projects.

Note: The following appendices have been omitted but are availabe in the ILO, Geneva, on special request:

1. Toronto Star stories on older workers.

2. Toronto Star story on Inco's "Golden Handshake".

3. Manitoba's Job Training for Tomorrow Program

4. Ontario's Transition Program

5. Canadian Jobs Strategy Training Programs

6. Federal Innovations Program

7. Federal Outreach Program

8. Retirement Planning Policy for Federal Public Service

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FOREWORD

For many years, following a steadily growing birth rate, some industrialised countries have had only one problem with older workers: they retire too late. The best way to make room for young people in the labour market was to encourage older workers to leave. Age 65, once the minimum retirement age, quickly became the maximum. But at present, this development is causing concern rather than contentment. With fewer young workers entering the labour force the position of older workers will have to be reconsidered.

Statistics show a rapidly ageing population in many industrialised countries. This trend has its roots in rising life expectancy, low-birth rates and the maturing of the post-war baby boom generation. In 1985, Germans aged 55 or more comprised about 27.4 per cent of the total population; by the year 2000, the proportion will have risen to about 32 per cent, by 2025, to about 44 per cent. By the turn of the century, this age group could account for nearly 29 per cent in Sweden, 28 per cent in Japan and Italy, 26 per cent in the UK and Belgium, 22 per cent in Canada and in the US.

Despite their growing numbers, these older people hold a diminishing share of the labour force, following the current trend of being "carried out" of the labour force by various means. From 1970 to 1985, the labour force participation rate of men aged 55-60 in Germany declined from 89 to 79 per cent; the rate of the 60-65 age grop from 74.7 to 33 per cent.

The ILO has recently started studying the training and retraining of older individuals in some industrialised countries. The "Older Workers Recommendation (162) 1980" (adopted on 23 June 1980 by the International Labour Conference) reveals the early interest of the organisation on this topic. Subsequently, the ILO (financially assisted by the Federal Republic of Germany) began to review the policies for the training and retraining of older workers. The study focuses on the ability of older workers to hold their jobs, to find a job, to be mobilised into self-employment, and to make their long evening of life useful to themselves and the community.

First findings of the main exploratory project suggest:

- *Old age is no handicap to learning.*
- *Older workers have a proven track record.*
- *Pre-retirement education is becoming widely available.*
- *Leisure time education is common.*
- *Senior service is only timidlly used.*
- *On-the-job training for older workers may be usual but is mostly invisible.*

– *Training for the job is scarcely used.*

– *The participation rate of older people in training or education courses is very low.*

This is one of several discussion papers dealing with the training needs of older workers in industrialised countries.

INTRODUCTION

Change in the years ahead and the question of how it should be managed are common themes in Canadian public debate. There is concern about how workers will be affected by economic restructuring due to advancing technology, the as-yet-known impact of the Canada-United States Trade Agreement should it proceed on course,[1] corporate rationalisation (streamlining, reduction of inefficiencies) and corporate takeovers[2] in which even loyal and long-serving employees may be sacrificed in the interests of what corporations see as their obligations to shareholders.[3]

Canadians generally appear to accept labour market change as an inevitable consequence of Canada's position in a global economy over which it has little control. Moreover, the view of the Economic Council of Canada that "the natural consequence of change - historically and in the future - is that some individuals profit while others lose"[4] is frequently voiced.

Many echo the Council's confidence that the overall picture, in the case of new technology, for example, is one of the "promises" in terms of the ultimate goals of rising productivity, higher quality, greater competitiveness and increased employment.[5] There is an acknowledged need for policies of various kinds to assist "special groups" such as older workers, whom the Council notes can be expected to "find the pace of change disconcerting."[6] This approach reflects what some political scientists term the "social insurance" - as opposed to socialist - orientation of Canadians.[7]

Market forces may be harsh but are accepted so long as there are social programmes to protect "losers" from catastrophe. Economic restructuring, worker dislocation, new policies to help the dislocated adjust: this is the language of the debate over the impact of change. It is a debate that is far from being resolved. The quest for appropriate "adjustment policies" promises no easy solutions.

1. FACTS AND FIGURES ON THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

Canadians aged 55 or more are a growing proportion of the population. Unfortunately, their labour market problems appear to be increasing as well. This group comprised of 20 per cent of the population in 1986, a census year. By the turn of the century, it may be close to 25 per cent.[8] Approximately 60 per cent of Canadians aged 55 to 59 were active in the labour force in 1986; the figure fell to about 40 per cent for 60 to 64 years old, and 7 per cent for those 65 and older.[9] For older males, the labour market participation rate has decreased almost every year during the last three decades. The rate for older females rose during the 1970s and peaked at the end of the decade, with marginal fluctuations ever since.[10] Thus, although the number of Canadians aged 55 to 64 years rose by 410,000 between 1976 and 1986, their labour force strength increased by only 145,000 and their share of the labour force declined. This occurred despite general labour market improvements following the recession of the early 1980s.

A Statistics Canada study of older workers also notes that many of those remaining in the labour force have turned to part-time work and self-employment.[11] In 1986, 12.8 per cent of workers aged 55 to 64 worked part time, and about one in five was self-employed.[12] The unemployment rate of older workers remains lower than that of the general population. However, in 1986, unemployment among older workers, at 7.3 per cent, was worse than 6.9 per cent it had been in the recession in 1982.[13] The unemployment rate for aged 25 to 54 fell from 8.8 to 8.2 per cent during the same period.[14] Moreover, 41 per cent of the 55- to 64-year-old workers who lost their jobs in the early 1980s withdrew from the labour force.[15] (In 1987, the unemployment rate for the 55 to 64 age group was 7.1.) Significantly, unemployed older workers aged 55 to 64 have much longer periods of job search than younger workers. The average duration of unemployment for those older workers was 31.3 weeks in 1986; for younger workers, it was 22.5 weeks.[16] In a more recent Statistics Canada analysis, older workers (55 and over) were found to be over-represented among the very long-term unemployed, accounting for 16 per cent of the total, compared with their 8 per cent representation in total unemployment. Persons 55 years and over were also over-represented among what Statistics Canada calls "discouraged workers," that is, jobless people who have given up looking for work and have withdrawn from the labour force because of the belief that no suitable work is available.[17]

1.1 Evaluation of the older population

Canadians who have reached the traditional retirement age of 65 are significantly less likely to find themselves in poverty that would have been the case just a few years ago. The number of unattached persons[18] 65 years or older below the poverty line[19] declined from 61.5 in 1980 to 42.7 in 1986.

For families with heads of 65 years or older, the poverty rate declined from 41.4 per cent in 1969 to only 9.5 per cent in 1986. The National Council of Welfare gives most of the credit for the changes to improvements in the retirement income system, such as the federal Guaranteed Income Supplement for low-income elderly and the maturation of the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans.[20] By 1986, the risk of poverty was slightly higher for members of families headed by persons aged 55 to 64 than for those headed by some aged 65 or over. Of families with heads aged 55 to 59, 10.9 per cent were below the poverty line in 1986; for those with heads aged 60 to 64, were somewhat less likely to fall under the poverty line than the 65 and older unattached. The comparative figures for unattached individuals for 1986 were 37.2 in poverty for those aged 55 to 59 and 40.7 per cent in the 60 to 64 age group.[21]

The population of over 55 years old in Canada is far from a homogeneous group. There are marked differences in economic security for those in threatened industries and those who are not, between workers in one industry towns and those in larger areas offering alternative employment, between those who have good pensions and those who do not; as well as between those whose heavy financial responsibilities are for the most part over and those who are still burdened, such as those who must care for elderly parents. There are differences in educational attainments, too. However, a couple of general observations can be made. The 55 years and over population had far fewer opportunities for education than members of the post-war baby boom who enjoyed the benefit of the rapid expansion of the post-secondary school system (not just the increase in institutions of learning but also the greater availability of grants and loans) that occurred in the 1960s. Many of this older group have only grade school (since even getting to high school was often difficult in some rural areas before the educational expansion).[22]

Workers in this age group also appear to have similar attitudes toward work and unemployment. If unemployed, they tend to blame themselves. As one employment service co-ordinator has observed: "This is an age group who perceive their employment and money problems as their own personal failure, a perception that compounds the emotional stress and makes it more difficult to fight off discouragement. A large percentage of unemployed middle-aged workers eventually experience health breakdowns."[23] Several newspapers, notably *The Totonto Star,* have attempted to portray the human side of the older worker statistics through features in which workers tell their own stories.

1.2 Early retirement and pension schemes

Retirement before the age of 65 - at 55, for example, is an option that appears to appeal to many Canadians, but it is far from available to all. Only 37.1 per cent of all female-paid employees and only 54.4 per cent of all male-paid employees were covered by private pension plans in 1984.[24] Increased job mobility means even many of those covered will not collect a full pension, although federal legislation (Bill C-90) passed in June 1986, aims to encourage more employers under federal jurisdiction to set up pension plans, include part-time workers in these plans, reduce the "vesting" period to two years, and make pensions more portable.

Comparable provincial legislation is expected in several provinces.[25] In 1985, as part of the federal conservative government's push for fiscal restraint, new legislation was introduced to require workers leaving the workforce to exhaust severance pay, vacation pay, and pension money before claiming unemployment insurance benefits. This move was viewed in many quarters as a disincentive to early retirement and spurred considerable public protest,[26] though not enough to

defeat it. Early retirement schemes have generally been introduced by large employers, in the public or private sector, or negotiated by large unions. Federal public servants with at least 30 years of pensionable service can retire any time after their 55th birthday with immediate entitlement to their pension.[27] Corporate leaders in the early retirement field include Vancouver-based forest products giant MacMillan Bloedel Ltd.; Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., Ottawa; General Motors of Canada, Oshawa; and Imperial Oil, Toronto.[28] Early retirement for blue-collar workers has been negotiated by the United Steel Workers and United Auto Workers (now Canadian Auto workers) but the majority of early retirements still involve more highly-paid management personnel.[29] Two related measures - phased retirement through job-sharing and pre-retirement leave - have made an appearance in Canada, but their use does not seem to be extensive. Job-sharing is a voluntary arrangement entered into at the discretion of the employees involved, in which two employees share a full-time position. One Labour Canada official observed that where job-sharing has been introduced, it has tended to be more for the benefit of young professional women who want to devote more time to parenting.[30] In response to an early draft of this report, another Labour Canada official asked that Labour Canada's position be amended to include the further observation that "while the desire to have more time for parenting has been one important factor in many job-sharing arrangements, this is not the exclusive domain of young women, but could equally be a motivating factor for men to pursue job-sharing arrangements."[31] About 9 per cent of collective agreements covering 500 or more workers have pre-retirement leave clauses providing extra weeks of vacation during the last five years before retirement.[32] The Quebec Government, concerned in large part about youth unemployment, has been attempting to encourage phased, or "progressive" retirement through its Joint Programme for Alternative Work Schedules. This programme offers technical and financial assistance to companies and municipal administrations that agree to prepare and implement a voluntary reduction of work schedules with their employees, provided that the working hours thus freed open new positions favouring the unemployed.[33] It should perhaps be noted here that mandatory retirement has been abolished in Manitoba, Quebec and New Brunswick.[34] A Supreme Court ruling on mandatory retirement is expected within a year or so.[35]

1.3 Employment market trends

Canada, along with other western industrialised countries, is widely held to have undergone significant changes in its economy in the decade-and-a-half since OPEC brought the post-war economic boom to a halt. Though seasonally adjusted unemployment is now around 8 per cent, the movement of many jobs to the Third World, the general decline of manufacturing and growth of the service sector, corporate mergers and cost reduction measures such as automation and the use of part-time rather than full-time labour are viewed as having taken a heavy toll on some Canadians, though there have been winners as well.[36] There is a widespread perception that new jobs being created are less desirable than the jobs being lost. In Hamilton, the loss of industrial jobs has been heavy. A newspaper article suggests that most of the jobs lost in the Hamilton area have been in the $12 to $14 (Canadian) an hour range and unionised, while most of the new jobs are low-paying, unskilled jobs in the service sector, such as jobs as clerks paying $4.35 to $6.62 (Canadian) an hour.[37]

Innovation and jobs in Canada, a research report prepared for the Economic Council of Canada and published in 1987, sounds a

note of warning: "Some traditional industries," it notes, "are getting smaller because other countries are challenging Canada's position as a supplier of natural resources to world markets; others are getting smaller as newly-industrialising countries put in place the technologies and expertise necessary for successful international competition; still others are growing but providing low-skilled jobs. Indeed, workers in a number of industries are being displaced by such structural change and are suffering a decline in relative earnings. So, while the benefits of economic growth are large and positive overall, in individual cases there are costs involved."[38]

Interestingly, most of the media coverage of the problems of unemployed older workers have focused on those who have lost jobs through plant closures generally related to changing world market conditions. Less attention has been paid to the phenomenon of managers and professionals losing jobs through corporate streamlining. As a Montreal career counsellor who helps executives find new jobs notes: "Downsizing is a fact of the times. Management realises that cutting two or three vice-presidents from a group of seven can mean an annual saving of quarter of a million dollars or more. For that you can keep about 20 workers."[39] Little research appears to have been done in this area. When professional or white-collar workers are fired because of corporate restructuring, changes in company style, or because the workers themselves are alleged to have "burned out" (a condition little understood, it would seem, but increasingly purported to affect older workers in high pressure or competitive fields), they often have little recourse, other than perhaps a civil wrongful dismal suit (which generally requires hiring a lawyer, possibly at considerable expense), or - if age seems to be a factor - resort to a federal or provincial human rights commission. An employee who takes either of these courses of action is likely to acquire a reputation for boat-rocking that can hurt his or her chances of re-employment. A discussion of some of the questions raised by such cases can be found in bFire Powera, by Toronto lawyer Brian Grosman, who has presented clients claiming wrongful dismissal.[40]

1.4 Overall perspective

Involuntary unemployment among older workers is gaining attention as an urgent social problem. As Albert Hearn, past Vice-Chairman of the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council last year told a YMCA Over-55 Conference examining employment services for the older worker: "The frustration of these people across Canada is causing alcohol problems, spouse beating, child abuse, and in some cases, threatens suicide."[41] Yet the problem still has rather low visibility relative to other social causes. For example, more attention is paid to homelessness among the poorest segment of society, the growing presence of food banks, and employment market inequalities experienced by women, visible minorities and youth. Writing to *The Toronto Star* in 1986, Gladys Dunn, who completed a study of older workers in 1985 before retiring from the civil service, notes that "these persons are not a vocal, visible group, as are youth, nor do they have any champions, as have youth."[42] Similarly, Jon Buttrum, Director of Hamilton's Citizen Action Group (sponsors of a programme to help older workers) has observed that: "There isn't the political visibility for the older workers. You don't see them hanging around the malls, they're either at home waiting for the phone to ring or knocking on doors."[43]

Hamilton has drawn public attention to the problems of older workers through an Older Worker's Week. The organisers have promoted the idea to other communities and some have shown interest.

However, none, so far as they know, is yet planning a similar event.[44]

Some observers feel there are large groups within the population - the baby boom generation, in effect - who see their own interests adversely affected by keeping older workers in the workforce rather than allowing them to be shed by various means. A background paper on the aging Canadian population prepared by a researcher in Canada's Library of Parliament suggests the large number of middle-aged people now occupying higher ranking positions is seen as an obstacle to the advancement of those below. "The lack of promotional possibilities is particularly acute in the public service and universities, where job security often prevents even the less competent among permanent employees from being fired. With few chances for advancement or job permanence, many professional people are becoming disgruntled and are turning to unions for protection or calling for some system of reviewing the productivity of their older colleagues."[45]

2. TRAINING POLICIES FOR OLDER WORKERS

2.1 Governments

Problems faced by older workers have been noted in various government discussion papers over the last few years. A number of recommendations have been made - some more than once. Few have been adopted. In 1981, a Federal Government Task Force on Labour market development recommended that emphasis be placed on adjustment policies to help older workers re-enter productive employment. "Wage subsidies to overcome employer resistance and short training packages to update skills can aid this group", the report said.[46] These two ideas still find much support, particularly among those counselling older workers. They have had very limited implementation, as will be discussed in section 4.

Federal public servant Gladys Dunn, who questioned 616 unemployed older workers in various cities across Canada, later reported that the comment of older workers which dominated all others was the reception clerks at Canada Employment Centres (the federal job placement agency) and to a lesser degree counsellors, had a negative and demeaning attitude. If a middle-aged jobseeker wanted training, he or she was often told there was a waiting period of a year-and-a-half.[47] Governments have increased support to programmes providing, community, union or industry-based "adjustment" services, such as counselling and training in job-hunt skills. But older workers still suffer from not being a federally-designated "target group" for employment-related programming, as are women, native persons, visible minorities and the disabled (groups which, of course, include some older workers). They thus compete with many other groups, including youth, ex-offenders, and immigrants for limited special training funding. Recently, in keeping with its concern for fiscal responsibility, the federal Government has placed new emphasis on targeting job training to social assistance recipients (sometimes abbreviated by initials as "SARs").[48] The "SARs" presumably also include a number of older workers, but the prospects for extensive federal or, in fact, provincial, training programmes tailored to the needs of older workers do not appear good.

Another possible impediment at the federal level is that there appears to be an unresolved policy debate concerning the question of whether workers aged 55 and over who are unemployed and without marketable skills should be encouraged to retrain or be given "bridging" money to carry them to age 65 when the old age pension and supplements, if needed, can take over. The federal Labour Adjustment Benefit Program, begun in 1972, was designed to provide bridging money to workers aged 54 and over who lost jobs in designated industries in selected communities (the industries tended to be those where workers had low educational attainment and were apt to have job-related illness or injuries; the communities were often one-industry towns where a major exodus of workers would cause substantial losses in property values.[49] It is not always politically feasible to have programmes

that will encourage populations - perhaps with the aid of retraining - to flow out of one region into another. In 1986, the Federal Government has proposed an older workers "bridging" programme, to be more broadly available, and to be cost-shared with the provinces, but it has been unable, so far, to get the agreement of all provinces. According to Labour Canada, the proposed Program for Older Worker Adjustment (POWA) would "focus on assisting permanently laid-off older workers who face severe hardship as a result of losing their jobs through major lay-offs or plant closures and have no immediate prospects for re-employment." The provinces have made important contributions to the proposed design of the programme, according to Labour Canada and "an announcement with respect to its implementation plan is expected in the near future."[50]

Training programmes at the federal level, as noted earlier, have not had large participation from older workers and have come under criticism on various grounds. The *Innovations and Jobs* report notes that several studies have concluded that, in the past, much of the publicly-funded training effort has been for occupations with a surplus of workers. It suggests funds should instead be directed at specific high-level skills that are clearly in demand: "In our view, support for employer-based training in these areas should be an explicit priority for the Federal Government training strategy."[51] In response, one federal bureaucrat maintains that the real skill shortages are at high levels, not at the low levels at which unemployed older workers could easily be restrained. Retraining might help older workers get jobs, but only by displacing other candidates for those jobs. It will not increase the general stock of jobs.

Conflicting claims are made in regard to the willingness of older workers themselves to undergo training. A Statistics Canada special survey on the labour adjustment experiences of workers permanently laid-off in the 1981 to 1984 period found that only 7 per cent of the 55 to 64 age group undertook some training, compared to 17 per cent of their young counterparts.[52] However, a possible explanation could be Dunn's findings that older workers did not have sufficient encouragement to take such programmes during these years.

2.2 Unions

Union membership in Canada, as elsewhere, is suffering the effects of shifts from the traditionally unionised manufacturing sector to the service sector, where the attempt to unionise has been less successful.[53] As for unions' role in obtaining training or retraining for workers whose skills are becoming outdated, the *Innovation and Jobs in Canada* report prepared for the Economic Council of Canada states that "in the final analysis ... our review suggests that there is not a great deal of collective bargaining on technological change and its impact. And where work contracts do contain clauses linked to technological change, they tend to be weakly enforced ..." Some provinces have helped matters in their jurisdictions by enacting statutory provisions aimed at encouraging technological change, the report adds. British Columbia's legislation is seen as a model in this regard.

In the case of complete plant closure, unions have worked to get bumping rights to other plants under the same corporate ownership, but they maintain older workers who often do not want to move because of homes and family ties to the community. Another solution is early retirement provisions. In an agreement which the Canadian Auto Workers presented to members as "the best close-out agreement that has ever been put together by our union", unionised

employees of the Holmes Foundry of Sarnia, Ontario, obtained various early retirement rights, including full "30-and-out" benefits for those with 25 years of service, as well as unreduced pensions for workers 50 years of age with at least ten years of service.[54] Unions have also negotiated light-duty clauses which give some protection by allowing an older worker to apply for a position that is less physically demanding. Such clauses tended to be negotiated by stronger bargaining units and can differ considerably in the protection they offer. Labour Canada data on collective agreements covering 500 or more employees (all sectors) shows that only 1.1 per cent of such agreements (12 agreements out of 1,084) contain clauses setting out the "right" of an older employee to transfer to a lighter or more suitable job. Another 5.6 per cent contain clauses expressing the willingness of the employer to transfer the older employee to another job if such a job is available. A further 2.3 per cent have other kinds of older-worker provisions, such as provisions relating to the hiring of older workers. Ninety-one per cent of the collective agreements have no older-worker provisions.[55]

2.3 Employers

A survey of 1,000 Canadian establishments carried out by two Economic Council of Canada researchers in late 1985 pointed to an overall "undertraining" in response to the introduction of technological change. In terms of total duration, one out of two training efforts took less than a month.[56] The technology-driven retraining reported by survey respondents was heavily concentrated in white-collar skills, the survey found. Only 12.6 per cent of the retraining programmes were for blue-collar occupations.[57] While the study did not look at the retraining of older workers specifically, it is interesting to note that the researchers observed that little of the retraining driven by technology had been focused on semi-skilled or unskilled workers.[58]

The Canadian Manufacturers' Association maintains that employers have "dramatically expanded" the kinds and levels of training that are considered "strategic and cost-justified". There is a role for more, a position paper states, but "it is important, however, that training should not be undertaken just for its own sake. It must be effective and relevant. It is costly; General Motors estimates $50 per hour as the cost of having an employee participate in training."[59] The position paper provides no actual data on the amount of retraining in Canadian industry. Similarly, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce takes the position that employers do more training than they are given credit for, but does not supply data in support of this claim.[60] The Business Council on National Issues has not studied the issue of retraining by employers, according to a spokesperson.[61]

The Canadian Manufacturers' Association also argues that "with each year, employers increase the degree to which they address the needs of special groups in their human resources planning, training and development and affirmative action programs".[62] But, again, no figures are given. The Association brief notes that today's unemployment is "not primarily a result of a lack of skills in the available workforce, skills are by and large available".[63] Moreover, it states, many companies report very little use or no use of government programmes in training. "There are few skill shortages today, unlike in the 1970s. Many employers are sceptical of government assistance, and are reluctant to become involved with a costly administrative and bureaucratic framework."[64] Tax credits would be better, it states.[65]

Government programmes have, so far, not been seen as effective in breaking down employer resistance to increased on-the-

job training. The national industrial training programmes do not appear to be making a significant contribution towards encouraging the "employer-sponsored training that we believe the new technologies demand", the authors of the *Innovations and Jobs in Canada* report state. "In fact, only one in eight technology-related training programs reported by the survey respondents received any financial assistance from the Government.[66]

In a more recent document, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association points out that "employers hesitate to train employees who may leave a firm, possibly to work for a competitor".[67] A CMA spokesman argues further that technological change often reduces jobs in one sector while creating new jobs in others, so the employer whose workers face job less may have no jobs for which to retrain them.[68]

2.4 Other federations, institutes or non-governmental organisations

Educators have expressed concern about high entrance requirements for trade courses and the length of the courses. Some feel these requirements are more demanding than they need to be, that they were designed not for the students, but for the people teaching the courses, and at a time when there were so many students some means had to be found to reduce the number of eligible applicants.[69] Putting an unemployed older worker, even a very bright one, into community college vocational courses designed for younger students can be like putting an afternoon jogger into the olympics, notes Humber College counselling chairman Craig Barrett. It is particularly difficult for somebody who has been good at everything all his life to have this experience, he adds.[70]

Although a great many non-governmental organisations, including some national ones such as the YMCA and the Ottawa-based One Voice Seniors' Network, have taken an interest at some time in the problems of older workers and, in some cases, provided counselling or training in job skills, it is not possible within the scope of this study to give a comprehensive account or analysis of this activity. Further information may be obtained from some of the individuals listed in the list of contacts.

2.5 Discussion papers, recommendations or other documents

The subject of further training for older workers is looked at from several perspectives in the report of the Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Rights entitled *Human Rights and Aging in Canada* The report that first-hand accounts of the experience of individuals, supported by a substantial body of social science research, convinced the Committee that the age discrimination plays a central role in the recommendations. Those dealing with training, or touching indirectly on training (including training in job-search techniques) are as follows:

- That Employment and Immigration Canada designate older workers (especially those older worker groups prone to long-term unemployment, if such groups can be identified) as a target group for the purposes of the Canadian Jobs Strategy.

- That Employment and Immigration Canada undertake an immediate and thorough review of options available for providing special assistance to unemployed older workers through Canada Employment Centres, and for overcoming prejudice on the part of some employers against the hiring of older workers.

- That the Government of Canada create an inter-departmental task force to explore the multiple impacts of corporate

rationalisation, plant closures and corporate takeovers on older workers, and seek the co-operation of provincial governments, as needed, in developing relevant measures including a comprehensive safety not including the protection of pensions, adequate notice and severance pay, and special retraining and job-search assistance.

- That Employment and Immigration Canada immediately launch a national advertising campaign focused on discouraged workers, and directed to fostering their use of departmental counselling, training and placement programmes.

- That Employment and Immigration Canada actively encourage the development of community-based employment services targeted to the needs of unemployed older workers, with a view to increasing the share of project funding received by such groups to at least 10 per cent of the total Outreach project funding by fiscal year 1990-1991.

- That, before 30 March 1989, Employment and Immigration Canada assess the employment needs of early retirees, review the adequacy of workforce reentry programmes, such as the Job Entry component of the Canadian Jobs Strategy, and develop measures as necessary to ensure that the option of a return to work accompanies the option of early retirement.

- That the Federal Government seek the co-operation of provincial governments in fostering increased participation of older Canadians in education and retraining programmes, through both the adaptation of these programmes and the enhancement of financial assistance available to older participants.

- That a national campaign against ageist attitudes, possibly co-ordinated at the federal level by the new Ministry of State for Senior Citizens, be launched immediately, and that it include increased support for non-governmental associations of older Canadians, which have already developed impressive resources of significant achievements in educating older Canadians about themselves and giving them an articulate public voice.[72]

Since *Human Rights and Aging in Canada* has only recently become public, it is difficult to predict how its recommendations will be received.

A report prepared by the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council, notes that changing economic conditions have had mixed results. "Among the rising concerns are the increasing rate of long-term unemployment among displaced older workers and other disadvantaged groups." However, "on the positive side", it argues that "the new economy has spawned thousands of jobs in new and expanding enterprises and opened many new opportunities for enterprise creation".[73] The report recommends several policy measures to help the Government "facilitate, not direct" the economic and employment development process in the "current economic reality".[74] The report's recommendation section does not propose specific programme initiatives but calls for some new programme evaluation mechanisms.[75]

A Review of the Canadian Jobs Strategy, an April 1988 report from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration makes a number of broad recommendations with regard to various programmes through which federal funds are spent on job training. It recommends that older workers (i.e., those who are 50 years of age and over) be identified as a target group under the Canadian Jobs Strategy. However, a preamble to the recommendations sug-

gests such targeting might be of limited duration. It notes that the authors believe older workers should be "identified for targeted assistance under the Canadian Jobs Strategy (at least until the Program for Older Worker Adjustment becomes operational)".[76]

The situation of older workers was examined in some depth in 1985 in the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council's report, *Older workers: An imminent crisis in the labour market*.[77] This report looked at the situation of workers aged 45 to 64. Research included consultation with various interested employers' and workers' organisations and group discussions with a number of unemployed older workers in several Canadian communities. The authors express concern about projected costs of bridging programmes such as the federal Labour Adjustment Benefits Program and press for more measures to reintegrate workers into the workforce. They note that, at the time of writing, Government programmes directed specifically at older workers were rare or non-existent. "Those that have some application to their age group are not utilised to any extent by older workers. They rarely participate in existing training and mobility programs."[78] The authors observe that, during the previous five years, the number of older males in the National Institutional and Industrial Training Programs combined represented an average of 5.3 per cent of all male trainees. For women, the average was 8.3 per cent of all female trainees. This compares, they added, with the labour force participation ratio of 26.8 per cent for men in the older age group and 21.8 per cent for women.[79] The report states the reasons for this low level of participation by older workers are difficult to pinpoint. "However, the lack of counselling in this area suggests a degree of apathy on the party of employers, Canada Employment Centres (offices of the federal Government's own placement agency), and older workers themselves."[80] It stresses that there is a strong agreement that some form of community support and counselling would ease the burden, and that "attempts should be made to change employers' attitudes toward older workers".[81] Employers do not appear to be willing to train older workers, it says "probably because they are concerned about not recovering their training investments".[82]

Discussing the preferences of those workers who do wish training, the report comments that they want training that will allow them to build on existing skills.[83] The Council found that some workers were willing to train for the growing service industry in occupations such as building maintenance. "However, they were puzzled as to why employers in that area are seeking workers with grades 12 and 13 when the work involved is quite menial."[84] The report finds that "unrealistically high academic requirements and disregard for experience make it difficult for workers with a minimum of formal education to qualify for entrance into training".[85] Moreover, older workers complain that training allowances under the national Institutional Training Program (since replaced by another set of federal training programmes) are insufficient to cover basic living costs while in training.[86]

The Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council report makes five normal recommendations on training. It recommends that Employment and Immigration Canada designate older workers between the ages of 45 and 64 as a "target group" for training under the Federal Government's Canadian Jobs Strategy. Employers would be provided with suitable incentives for training, retraining and upgrading older workers on the job in any occupation. It says the level of training allowance for institutional training should be equal to 60 per cent of the industrial composite[87] (or equivalent after Decem-

ber 1985) to cover basic living costs, and that transportation allowances and special allowances should be raised to a realistic level. It recommends that Employment and Immigration Canada consult with provincial training authorities to determine a method that could be introduced to allow older workers to qualify for entry into courses of training by passing an equivalency test which would measure experience as well as formal education. Further, it calls on the minister to consult with her provincial counterparts to consider the development of national standards for training and the issuance of certificates, in approved courses, which would be recognised in all areas of Canada, whether offered through provincial institutions, non-profit organisations or on-the-job training. Finally, it recommends that older workers who are advised by their employers that their skills may become redundant in the foreseeable future as a result of new technologies, business rationalisation or closure, be provided with training and educational leave, without loss of income. This training, it states, should enable them to acquire skills for future jobs in the locality, or to obtain basic skills required for further training or greater career flexibility.[88] None of these training-related recommendations has been adopted by the Federal Government.[89]

A subsequent Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council report suggests that special attention be paid to the 55 to 64 age group because the original study revealed that this is the group most adversely affected by current economic adjustments.[90] It reiterates that, even for the older group, bridging programmes, such as the proposed Program for the Older Workers Adjustment (which would replace the Labour Adjustment Benefits Program), should be a last resort only, with primary programme emphasis placed on reintegration into the workforce.[91]

More recently, in a June 1988 "Policy Note", addressed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration, the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council points out that the employment situation of older workers, particularly those in the 55-64 age group, has not improved since 1985 and has, in fact, deteriorated even further. "Since little, if anything has been done to address this problem", it notes, "the predicted imminency (a reference to the imminent crisis referred to in the title of the 1985 report) may now have materialised".[92] The policy note refers to the different financial circumstances of older workers and suggests that the need is not for a universal older workers' programme but rather "a selective approach to older-worker adjustment based on individual need".[93] More specifically, it states that this sort of focused approach may require "a form of eligibility analysis resembling a means test, an approach which is often distasteful, but sometimes necessary".[94] The alternatives, the authors suggest, are programmes selected by industrial sector or geographic area - which could leave out many needy individuals; or a programme offering Labour Adjustment Benefits-type assistance to all older workers at a cost that might run as high as Can.$1 billion a year.[95]

The 1984 report of the National Advisory Council on Skill Development Leave, "Learning for life", makes a number of training-related recommendations, including one calling for a programme whereby employees told by their employers that they may become redundant in the foreseeable future would work a four-day week, the fifth day used for retraining. Under this scheme, the employer would pay for the four days, maintaining benefits for the fifth, while the Unemployment Insurance Fund would pay the full salary for the fifth day.[96] This recommendation has not been adopted by the Government.[97]

Innovation and Jobs in Canada, prepared for the Economic Council of Canada, notes that in the early 1980s portable wage subsidies were offered to laid-off workers in designated industries and communities. A voucher was given to the individual worker, who could offer it to a prospective employer. The report proposes that similar vouchers be used to cover the cost of "legitimate" employer-sponsored training. They could also be used as tuition for programmes at educational or training institutes. In countries where such systems exist, the report adds, the worth of the vouchers tends to be based on the workers's age or the length of his/her attachment to the labour force. This increases their usefulness as an adjustment tool for older workers.[98] This report has only become available in recent months, so it is perhaps too soon to judge whether its recommendations will be acted upon.

2.6 Overall perspective

As noted earlier, there are competing claims regarding the degree to which older workers wish to undertake training, as opposed to receiving a "bridging" allowance. While some maintain that workers want to be re-employed as a matter of dignity,[99] there is some anecdotal evidence that the dignity in question may have less to do with the actual work than with being paid as a matter of entitlement rather than public charity, and at a level that allows a reasonably comfortable standard of living. For example, in a *Toronto Star* story about Inco workers who have accepted what is widely perceived as an exceptionally generous "golden handshake" in recognition of their many years of work for the company, there is litle evidence that they are going to miss going to work everyday. However, the prospect for many older workers forced into early retirement is not a generous benefit as a matter of entitlement but rather welfare - just enough to get by - and the sense of being a burden on society. It is often suggested that volunteer work might help instil a sense of contributing to one's community but finding the right "fit" in a volunteer position is not always easy; many organisations screen volunteers and will not accept someone merely on the grounds of his or her eagerness to work.[100]

3. LEGAL ASPECTS, PROGRAMMES AND EXPERIMENTS

Manitoba's Job Training for Tomorrow Program offers wage assistance to private sector businesses, institutional organisations and community/non-profit groups to encourage the creation of positions which provide on-the-job training and skill development for unemployed Manitobans. Funding is determined by the skill level of the prospective employee in relation to the position applied for. As a "special incentive", employers proposing to hire an unemployed person 55 years of age or over are eligible for an additional position with the intention of becoming full-time and permanent.[101] In the programme's first year, 3,112 persons were placed in jobs. Of these, 100 were aged 55 or over. In the first part of the second year (November 1987 to April 1988), 1,153 persons were placed, of whom 28 were 55 and over. The jobs in which the 55 and over workers were placed were highly diverse. Many of the jobs categories suggest that the degree of job training would not be extensive.

One of the important factors in finding placements, according to a programme spokesperson, is active solicitation of employers by programme personnel. This includes going into the rural regions of the province in search of potential employers.[102]

Transitions, an Ontario programme whereby a worker over the age 45 who has lost a job as a result of an employer going out of business, closing or moving of a plant, a permanent layoff or the failure of a self-operated business can get a training credit of up to Can.$5,000 to cover training expenses with a new employer, private trainer or public institution. The programme is not aimed at channelling people into scarce skills, but rather to give the worker maximum choice. Any training qualifies, as long as it "increases skills related to participants' employment prospects".[103] Living expenses are not covered but some participants are able to have federally administered unemployment insurance benefits continued through the training period; others get help from the Ontario Student Award Program. If the "trainer" is an employer, the employer is expected to pay the participant's wage during the training. Between its inception, 4 August 1987 and the end of March 1988, the programme received 1,708 applications, of which 1,084 were approved. Some 263 training programmes were already underway or completed (a number of participants took more than one "program", i.e. they may have taken one course in small engine repair, plus another in how to start your own business). No firm data of age breakdown is yet available, but a programme spokesperson said an informal count during the first couple of months of the programme indicated that most applicants were between 45 and 50 years of age.[104] Of the 263 training programmes underway as of 31 March 1988, 84 were in colleges of applied arts and sciences, 15 in universities, 145 in private vocational schools, 10 in other institutions and none with employers. However, a programme spokesperson said the interest of employers has picked up in the last few months. To keep bureaucratic red tape to a minimum, Transitions personnel have designed a sample training proposal form.

There is not a great deal of detail required. Popular training choices have been computer training of all kinds, from word processing to desk-top publishing.[105] Truck driving is reportedly popular with older applicants because it takes only two weeks to get a truck driver's licence and the market demand is quite strong.[106]

Alberta's Entrepreneurial Training Program provides unemployed persons with a chance to get into business for themselves by developing their entrepreneurial and management skills. The training takes place at three Alberta community colleges. The Can.$350 tuition fee for the 15-week intensive training programme is paid by the federal and provincial governments. More than 200 persons applied to enter the course offered early in 1987. Only about 70 of the applicants were accepted. A Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council report estimates the average age of students to be around 40. Not all the students who enrol graduate, it notes. "About 25 to 35 per cent drop out when they realise that they are not cut out for a career in small business." Of those who complete the course, the report notes, about half start a business almost immediately. Others take longer because of the type of business involved.[107]

The Federal Government operates a number of training programmes open to workers of all ages under the umbrella programme known as the Canadian Jobs Strategy. (Changes in some of the programmes are expected this year.) No formal evaluations of the programmes are available at this time.

The National Labour Market Innovations Program is a federal programme which assists individuals and groups to identify, significant labour market issues and opportunities.[108] Projects receive funding from other sources as well. Innovations grants given to initiatives for older workers include such community-based projects as the Hamilton Older Workers Project (Citizen Action Group, 33 Bold Street, Hamilton, Ontario, L8P 1T3, Telephone 416 521-9125). This project tests the concept of a flexible wage subsidy for older workers as a means of reintegration into the labour market. A condition of the grant is that 75 per cent of the participants in the project should be persons receiving social assistance (welfare) or in their last four weeks of unemployment insurance benefits. This project received Can.$500,000 in federal funding for 18 months. It is designed to handle 70 participants and currently has about 60 on file, with space for ten more. About 120 persons applied for the programme, by one organiser's estimate. Some were eliminated for reasons such as serious illness. The programme provides 100 per cent of a wage subsidy for the first six weeks of employment, and can provide a reduced subsidy thereafter up to a maximum of 18 weeks. Those 55 or over generally go into jobs where they can be productive right away and get on-the-job training, maybe involving a couple of hours a day reviewing manuals. Employers are not averse to training, according to one programme co-ordinator, so long as it does not involve extensive red tape. Placements have been diverse; some have gone to day-care centres; some to factory assembly lines or work in quality control; some have found jobs working with computers. Employers are reportedly happy with older workers largely on the grounds of their reliability, maturity and strong work ethic. The Hamilton Older Workers Project involves intensive counselling with participants to make sure they are in the right "headspace" (have the right mental attitude) for taking a job, and that all personal problems, financial and medical, for example, have been dealt with before the job starts.[109] The Hamilton Older Workers project will eventually evaluate its performance on the number of participants who are still employed after one year. Of 15 who have

already reached the one-year mark, 13 are still employed.[110]

Another Innovations programme is the Retraining and Pre-retirement Program of Local 1005, United Steelworkers of America (1031 Barton Street, Hamilton, L8L 3E3, Telephone (416) 547-1417). This is a service provided by the union which assists its members to acquire the necessary skills to deal with unemployment, lay-off and early retirement. It received an Innovations grant of Can.$183,000 for 21 months. A private evaluation of this project appeared generally favourable, but was short on hard data. It noted, among other things that counsellors found retraining to be a difficult proposition for those caught in the situation of not having completed Grade 12, which was the situation of many steelworkers.[111] Some resist schooling because of "test phobia".[112] Others will not accept the reality that they have been permanently laid off. "There is usually one person in each class who involves the instructor in complicated arithmetical calculations to prove that there is still a chance that he might go back to working full time for the company (Stelco)."[113]

The Canadian Steel Trade Conference has been granted Can.$20 million from the Innovations programme for its Canadian Steel Sector Adjustment project. This project will administer and deliver a sectorally-led labour market adjustment activity for the Canadian steel industry. It will test the feasibility, effectiveness and efficiency of having the private sector deliver adjustment programmes directly over 36 months. No evaluation is yet available on this project. Contact person is Judy Barrie, Canadian Steel Trade Conference, Suite 803, 234 Eglington East, Toronto, M4P 1K7, Telephone (416) 480-1797.

The Centres de Gestion et Services de Laval (362, Blvd. Bellerose Est, Vimont, Laval, Quebec, H7K 2T4, Telephone (514) 669-9509), received Can.$246,555 in innovations funding for a 15-month project described as a project to address the two labour market problems of unemployment of professionals 40 years of age and up, and an increasing rate of small business failure, by providing a management service, based on a pooling of the skills and experience of these unemployed professionals, to small businesses experiencing difficulty.

Eva Wadolna and Associates (Suite 600, West Hastings Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, V6E 3X2 (604) 684-4543), has been granted Can.$379,700 in federal Innovations funding for 33-month project to test "an integrated personal and business development model used as a mechanism of mobilising older, displaced, professional or managerial workers".

The Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) also has a programme known as Outreach which provides limited-term funding for employment-related services, through community-based organisations, to groups of people who for various reasons are not able to effectively utilise the services of their Canada Employment Centre (CEC). Funding comes from the Unemployment Insurance Account. The underlying philosophy is that there are community associations who understand the needs of unemployed or underemployed persons who have particular difficulties entering or competing in the labour market, who enjoy a good relationship with them, and would be anxious to help them become employed.[114]

An interesting point raise by one of the coordinators of an Outreach-funded agency is that unemployed older workers can benefit not only from training in job-hunting skills but also training in stress management. She reports that the problem is not necessarily solved when the worker finds employment: a number of clients abandon their jobs soon after being placed. "Some

claim their job performances were not up to standard and that their health was suffering because of pressure and anxiety." When a staff member contacts the employer concerned, the story may be quite different. The client's work may, in fact, have satisfactory and the employer may even have urged him or her to stay. Counselling offered by this agency (Ability Personnel Association, Victoria, British Columbia) is aimed at helping the client understand that the depression experienced is related to being unemployed and having to job-hunt, not with working. "Clients are more successful in establishing themselves in new jobs if they understand that feelings of anxiety are common, and will subside eventually."[115]

Among other government-funded retraining projects: a new training centre set up by the Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto. The centre is to offer classes to combat illiteracy among the council's 180,000 members in addition to career and personal counselling. The centre is funded for two years by a Can.$1.25 million federal grant and a Can.$500,000 provincial grant. It was announced in September, following the completion of a year-long study on the impact of new technology on Metro Toronto's secondary manufacturing sector.[116] Further details may be obtained from the Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto (5 Gervais Drive, Suite 407, Don Mills, Ontario, M3C 1Y8).

Training for older workers aimed at enhancing retirement seems less problematic than job-related training. Retirement planning courses, for example, are often available from local municipalities or school board. A number of large employers are offering this service as well. Notable in this area are the Federal Government, Bell Canada, the Toronto Dominion Bank, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.[117]

A number of programmes are available for those who wish to take couses of various kinds during retirement or as they approach it. The trend, until recently, was for universities to give seniors a break on fees, but some have stopped doing so because of the cost squeeze they are facing.[118] Still, universities are not the only avenue for post-retirement training and did not, in fact, draw that many seniors, even when fees were waived.

Mark Novak, in *Successful aging in Canada*, notes that lower fees are not enough to attract older people to universities. They have to feel comfortable and welcome. Citing, in part, work done by Carleton University sociologists John Myles and Monica Boyd, he points out that the crowds, paperwork of registration, the loud music on the campus, and the fact that classes may be dispersed over a very wide area can be discouraging. Someone might have to travel 45 minutes each way during rush hour on three different days of the week just to take one course. Moreover, the "tell 'em-and-test 'em" methods used in schools today assume that students know nothing and are demeaning to older students.[119] Novak discusses Creative Retirement Manitoba, where older people design courses and programmes for themselves that meet their needs. He notes that Creative Retirement's director says that the most popular courses are the ones which teach people to care for themselves. "People take these classes because they don't want to be a burden on others." Courses in holistic health and heart attact first aid have drawn large numbers. Courses in philosophy, calligraphy, and self-hypnosis have been well-received. The curriculum committee experiments and drops courses that do not have much appeal.[120]

New Horizons, developed in 1972, by the Department of National Health and Welfare, provides federal financial contributions to enable retired persons to join with others of their age in group activities which

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they organise themselves. A project idea may originate with one person, but there should be a group of no less than ten persons - most older and permanently retired from the workforce - who will accept responsibility for the management of the project and the administration of project funds. The basic purposes is to provide seed funding to enable a group of retired persons to initiate a project with a view to becoming self-sufficient. Educational activities listed in a Health and Welfare Canada brochure include formal and informal ecology, languages, metric system, public speaking, retirement planning, crafts, hobbies and sports.[121]

Elderhostel Canada, offering short courses for older adults, was organised in June 1986. In co-operation with some 100 institutions across Canada, it has offered educational opportunities to some 10,000 older adults.[122]

Training initiatives are generally at too early a stage, or too limited in application, for impact on the general population of older workers and retired individuals to be significant or visible. In fact, it is difficult to even get assessments of whether limited programmes are meeting their goals. Often, and particularly in the case of community-based projects, the funding does not provide for sophisticated evaluation methodology. Moreover, talking to those directly involved in these programmes provides some fascinating glimpses of the problems faced by older workers (and, in some cases, solutions that have been found), counsellors and co-ordinators are not unbiased; many presumably hope that these projects will be seen as worthy of more funding. Written inquiries to each of the Innovations and Outreach projects produced little of an evaluative nature, although such material was requested.

SUMMARY

The demographic figures of Canada show that at present about 20 per cent of the population is 55 years of age or older. Up to the year 2020 this figure will be about 32 per cent. That is a significant increase comparable to the US (29 per cent), but moderate compared, for example, with the Federal Republic of Germany which will have at that time over 40 per cent. The activity rates of the age groups 55-64 and 64 and over have sharply declined, but again less than that of some European countries.

Of the 2.3 million Canadians aged 55-64 in 1986, nearly one-half (1.1million) were outside the labour force. Only 2.3 per cent of aged 55-64 Canadians outside the labour force in 1986 had looked for work in the past six months.

The special training needs of older workers and retired individuals have received increasing recognition in Canada in recent years. However, concern expressed in the media and in various government discussion papers has been slow to translate into bpoliciesa and programmes, particularly programmes for those who require training in job skills.

Conflicting claims are made in regard to the willingness of older workers themselves to take training. A survey of workers permanently laid off in the 1981 to 1984 period found that only 7 per cent of the 55 to 64 age group undertook some training, compared to 17 per cent of their young counterparts. However, a possible explanation could be that older workers did not have sufficient encouragement to take such programmes.

Another possible impediment at the federal level is that there appears to be an unresolved policy debate concerning the question of whether workers 55 and over who are unemployed and without marketable skills should be encouraged to retrain or to be given "bridging" money to carry them to age 65 when the old age pension and supplements, if needed, can take over.

Training programmes

Although there is yet little special public policy on training or retraining older workers there are some interesting pilot projects conducted in this field.

The Manitoba's Job Training for Tomorrow Program offers wage assistance to encourage the creation of positions which provide on-the-job training and skill development for unemployed. Funding is determined by the skill level of thTransitions, an Ontario programme whereby an unemployed worker over aged 45 can get a training credit of up to Can.$5,000 to cover training expenses with a new employer, private trainer, or public institution.

The Federal Government operates a number of training programmes open to workers of all ages under the umbrella programme known as the Canadian Jobs Strategy. Another federal programme is the National Labour Market Innovations Program (Innovations) which funds i.e. initiatives for older workers as well.

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The Hamilton Older Workers Project is one of these programmes. It tests the concept of a flexible wage subsidy as a means of reintegration of hard-to-place unemployed older workers into the labour force. The project involves intensive counselling with participants to make sure they are in the right "headspace" for taking a job, and that all personal problems, financial and medical, for example, have been dealt with before the job starts.

Other projects under Innovations or the Outreach Program put as well emphasis on counselling during the first year after starting a new job or on combatting illiteracy in addition to career and personal counselling.

Another project in Hamilton will test the Union's effectiveness in assisting its members by a retraining and pre-retirement programme (academic upgrading, industrial orientation, skill development, pre-retirement counselling).

In Vancouver the project "Entrepreneurism for older displaced professionals" will test an integrated personal and business development model as a mechanism of mobilising into self-employment for the older, displaced professional or managerial worker.

Training for older workers aimed at enhancing retirement seems less problematic than job-related training. A number of courses are available for those who wish to take courses of various kinds during retirement or as they approach it.

Universities having been active in this field are not always successful in attracting older people. They often don't feel comfortable and welcome and have begun to design courses and programmes (outside the universities) for themselves that meet their needs.

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